



University of Connecticut
School of Engineering

Computer Science &
Engineering

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Dear Members of the Appropriations Committee,

Thank you for your consideration of my written testimony. Other times, I have appeared for live remarks, but I regret that I am unable to do so this year – I am fighting a deadline on a proposal for NIH funding. This provides context for my remarks.

I am absent in order to seek funding for my research program and to train students. I accept that responsibility as a faculty member. It would be easier for me if those funds were provided as part of the State budget, but that is unrealistic.

Extend that comparison to UConn and this Committee. The State has been very generous to UConn, both in its operating and capital budget. For that, I thank this Committee and the citizens of Connecticut. Yet, each year it appears that UConn asks for more, claiming that each dollar is critical to survival – an unsustainable process.

I suggest a guiding approach for shared responsibility:

Joint development of a sustainable budget with funding responsibilities articulated.

I offer a comparison to Governor Malloy's proposal to change the Educational Cost Sharing formula. It has long been acknowledged as broken and his proposal is merely a first step in the hard process of finding an improved alternative. I suggest a similar path is essential for UConn's funding, both for UConn and the State. Some items I would suggest to consider.

- Capital costs are often separated from operational costs. While there is some rationale to this dichotomy, the bonded dollars quickly become debt service which becomes a non-negotiable part of the budget.
- While UConn ranks well in metrics on academic success, student job placement, faculty funding, it is well below its peer and aspirant institutions in its endowment. The increase of the endowment could well be part of any plan for UConn to have its own source for discretionary funds.
- UConn has achieved considerable athletic success, but that field is changing rapidly and it should be carefully examined if the pursuit of a 'Power Five' membership is a good investment.
- The use of non-state funds has been prominent in some expenditures that raised budgetary concerns. That the funds are not from the state budget should not be a blanket justification to avoid state scrutiny. The dollars are fungible. The State's investment in UConn, both historical and on-going, mean that it has a

reasonable oversight interest in the expenditure of its funds – must as a bank that mortgages one's house can stipulate certain ongoing financial criteria be met.

These are only places to start the conversation, but it must be a mature one of UConn responsibilities to match taxpayers' generosity. Just continuing to ask for more money is like the teenager appealing to the parents for the latest consumer items to keep pace with contemporaries.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Thomas J. Peters". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'T' and 'P'.

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